

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-07

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DRAFTED BY PM/DCA:RAMARTIN:SAC

APPROVED BY S/S - MR. GAMMON

P - REBARBOUR

PM - MR. SLOSS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 192047

E.O. 11652: GDS 12/31/79

TAGS: PARM, AS, FR, NZ

SUBJECT: SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR FREE ZONE

1. SUMMARY: AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR PLIMSOLL, AT HIS INITIATIVE, CAME IN TO SEE UNDER SECRETARY PORTER SEPTEMBER 25, TO REAFFIRM GOA NEGATIVE VIEWS ON A SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR FREE ZONE (NFZ) ON EVE OF NEW ZEALAND PM KIRK'S VISIT TO US. (PLIMSOLL NOTED THAT AUSTRALIAN PM WHITLAM MADE KNOWN THESE VIEWS TO SECRETARY KISSINGER DURING LATE JULY WHITLAM VISIT.) GOA OBJECTIONS INVOLVE BOTH SUBSTANTIVE AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. REAL PROBLEM IS CONTINUING FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTS IN PACIFIC. IT NOT AS EASY TO RESIST KIRK NFZ IDEA WHILE FRENCH CONTINUE TESTING, THEREFORE, IT IN US
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INTEREST TO PRESS GOF TO STOP TESTING. END SUMMARY.

2. PLIMSOLL EMPHASIZED AT OUTSET THAT, ALTHOUGH NEW ZEALAND AWARE OF GOA NEGATIVE VIEWS ON A SOUTH PACIFIC NFZ, GNZ NOT AWARE AUSTRALIA CONVEYING THEM TO USG, AND ASKED THAT THIS FACT-BE RESPECTED. UNDER SECRETARY PORTER ASSURED HIM ON THIS POINT, AND NOTED THAT INsofar AS SUBSTANCE IS CONCERN-ED GOA AND US VIEWS ARE QUITE SIMILAR.

3. PLIMSOLL HANDED AMBASSADOR PORTER AN EXTRACT FROM PM KIRK'S SPEECH AT VICTORIA UNIVERSITY AUGUST 25, AS LEAD-IN TO SUBSTANTIVE OBJECTIONS GOA HAS, NAMELY: A) PHILOSOPHICAL SKEPTICISM ABOUT NFZS (PLIMSOLL POINTED OUT THAT KIRK HAD LISTED THREE IN HIS SPEECH, BUT EACH--ANTARTICA, LATIN AMERICA AND AFRICA--INVOLVES SPECIAL CASE OR IS DISTINGUISHABLE FROM SOUTH PACIFIC.); B) AN NFZ IS NOT USEFUL IF NUCLEAR POWERS, FOR EXAMPLE, FRANCE, WOULD NOT OBSERVE IT; C) IN SOUTH PACIFIC AREA, WHERE GREAT POWER INTERESTS INVOLVED, AN NFZ WOULD BE CONTRARY TO NEED FOR BALANCE; AND D) IT NOT PRUDENT TO FORECLOSE OPTIONS WHICH IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO EXERCISE IN FUTURE.

4. POLITICALLY, PLIMSOLL NOTED, THERE WOULD BE PRESSURE IN AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY TO SUPPORT IDEA IF KIRK PUSHES A SOUTH PACIFIC NFZ. PM WHITLAM, HOWEVER, FEELS HE CAN CONTAIN SUCH PRESSURE BECAUSE--ARGUABLY--THE SUBSTANCE OF AN NFZ IS ALREADY ACHIEVED THROUGH LIMITED TEST BAN TREATY, NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY AND SEABED TREATY. FRANKLY, HOWEVER, AS WHITLAM TOLD SECRETARY KISSINGER, IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR LABOR GOVERNMENT TO RESIST SUCH PRESSURE SO LONG AS FRANCE CONTINUES NUCLEAR TESTS IN THE PACIFIC. IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY USEFUL IF THE US COULD HELP BRING AN END TO FRENCH PACIFIC TESTS.

5. UNDER SECRETARY PORTER THANKED AMBASSADOR PLIMSOLL FOR HIS CANDID COMMENTS, AND NOTED THAT GOA AND US VIEWS ON SUBSTANCE ARE CLOSE. AMB. PORTER SAID WE RECOGNIZE FRENCH ANGLE, BUT AS A PRACTICAL MATTER HE DID NOT BELIEVE FRANCE WOULD STOP TESTING AND, OF COURSE, A SOUTH PACIFIC NFZ WOULD BE NO GOOD IN THAT CIRCUMSTANCE. AMBASSADOR PORTER AGREED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE USEFUL TO CLOSE OFF US

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OR AUSTRALIAN OPTIONS, NOTING THAT OUR MUTUAL SECURITY INTERESTS, AS BEST EXEMPLIFIED IN ANZUS, WOULD NOT BE SERVED BY THIS. ONE SUCH OPTION SUGGESTED BY PLIMSOLL AT THIS POINT WAS TO HAVE US NUCLEAR SHIPS USE AUSTRALIAN PORTS AT SOME FUTURE TIME.

6. AMBASSADOR PORTER IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION SAID THAT US VIEWS ARE KNOWN TO NEW ZEALAND, AND THAT IF PM KIRK

RAISES ISSUE THESE VIEWS WILL BE REAFFIRMED. RUSH

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